

# CALIFORNIA BIODIVERSITY NEWS

California Biodiversity Council

Fall/Winter 2008 Vol. 15 No. 1



by  
**Mike  
Chrisman**  
Co-Chair,  
California  
Biodiversity  
Council

## FROM THE CHAIR

California's natural, historical and cultural resources are unparalleled. And yet, despite the diverse wonders our state has to offer, recent evidence shows that today's youth are spending more time inside watching television or playing video games than visiting parks, swimming at the beach or camping under the stars.

Concerned that kids were becoming less connected with nature, the California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism in 2007 drafted a "Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights." The Bill of Rights points to 10 activities or expe-

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## Connecting Children to Nature

by Nina Gordon, California State Parks

*This article is adapted from the California State Parks Newsletter, The Catalyst (Summer, 2008).*

**T**his meeting of the California Biodiversity Council is about joy and discovery and our future. It is about a child's anticipation while turning over a log and the resultant squeal of delight upon discovering a centipede running along on a wave of moving legs. It is about hearing the little croak of a frog and seeing the startled green lump come to life and leap into a pond. It is

experiencing the sense of accomplishment in using hands, limbs and feet to find a route to those upper tree branches and, once there, discovering a perfect perch with bird friends from which to spy on the hapless grownups below. It is spending an afternoon skipping rocks across a creek, becoming thoroughly soaked in the process of searching for perfect projectiles. It is

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*State Parks teaches children that nature is everywhere*

# From the Chair

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periences children should have in the natural environment before they turn 14 years old, like learning to swim, playing on a team or catching a fish.

I'm pleased that at its Oct. 8-9 meeting in Oakland the California Biodiversity Council will discuss ways to encourage young people to become engaged with the natural environment again. After all, today's youth will soon become California's leaders. Through hike or bike trips, wildlife watching or picnics along the coast and under the redwoods, children gain the knowledge and experience they need to be good stewards of our environment. And, they develop a strong appreciation not only of where they come from but also of California's rich past.

I ask you to join us for this month's important CBC meeting. By working together, I'm confident we can develop effective ways to get kids off the couch and back outside. There's so much waiting for them. 🌿

# The CCC: A Cure for Nature Deficit Disorder

by David Muraki, California Conservation Corps

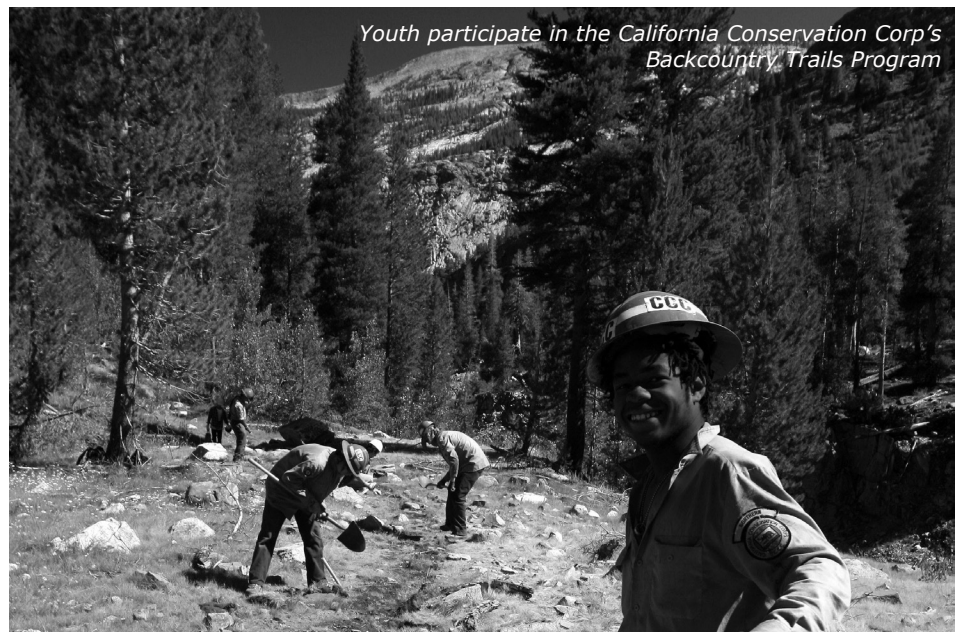
Californians age 18 to 25 can find a total cure to nature deficit disorder through a year of hard work in the California Conservation Corps. During a year in the CCC, young women and men are likely to fully experience the wonders of nature as well as the heat, rain, cold, bugs and weeks sleeping in a fire camp on the ground under the stars.

What's more, because this year of service in the Corps is for the purpose of restoring and providing access to our state's lands and waters, this cure comes with an understanding and appreciation of the pressures on our environment and the effort it takes to

protect our natural resources. The great majority of young adults who join the CCC come from urban neighborhoods and many have very limited exposure outside of their home environment. Prior experience in nature is not required to be successful in the CCC.

One of the CCC's programs of which I have first-hand knowledge gained from my younger years is the Backcountry Trails Project. More than 90 young adults are sent annually into the incomparable wilderness areas of Yosemite, Kings Canyon, Trinity Alps, Marble Mountains and points beyond. For 22 weeks, Back-

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Youth participate in the California Conservation Corp's Backcountry Trails Program





# Growing Support for Environmental Education

by Tom Waldron, No Child Left Inside Coalition

Getting kids outside to learn about the environment has become a popular cause in Washington, D.C., and around the country.

Spearheading the effort has been the No Child Left Inside Coalition, which is made up of a wide range of organizations - more than 675 groups representing more than 40 million members.

The Coalition includes major environmental groups, educational groups such as the National Education Association, environmentally minded businesses and health-related organizations, including the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

The Coalition is working to pass the No Child Left Inside Act (H.R.



3036 and S. 1981), which would provide federal funding to states to train teachers in environmental education and to operate model environmental education programs, which include outdoor learning. The bill would also provide funding to states that create environmental literacy plans to ensure that high school graduates are environmentally literate. And it provides new funding through an environmental education grant program to build state and national capacity.

The Coalition believes that this

legislation will reinvigorate environmental education and create a new awareness of environmental issues, improve children's health and contribute to a healthier, more sustainable society. To bolster its case, the Coalition points to research showing that environmental lessons lead to stronger student engagement and achievement - in a range of academic subjects.

The NCLI Coalition also argues that the enormous challenges facing the environment, including global climate change and threats to air and water, require that American schools improve environmental instruction now.

Support for environmental education is growing in Congress. The NCLI Act passed the House Education and Labor Committee with bipartisan support last summer and passed the full House in September.

For more information about the No Child Left Inside Act and the No Child Left Inside Coalition, go to [www.NCLICoalition.org](http://www.NCLICoalition.org). 🌿



Youth participate in an environmental education activity day



# The California Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights

by Nina Gordon, California State Parks

With recent concerns about youth detachment from the natural world and outdoor activities, lack of physical exercise and increased health risks, the California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism created the California Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights (COBR). The COBR is a life list of ten fun activities that all children "should have a chance to experience between the ages of 4 and 14. The activities are designed to be simple and achievable with the goal of promoting outdoor recreation, and a connection to nature and heritage.

Studies show that participating in these activities results in children being healthier and happier and strengthens family bonds. The COBR appeals both to kids, parents and organizations. Kids enjoy it as the activities are fun and it provides a challenge with potential rewards. Parents are very supportive since the COBR gives them a structure and reminder to get their kids outside and active and encourage family participation. The COBR also serves as a catalyst to promote collaborations among organizations and agencies. For example,

the YMCA can offer swim lessons, local historical societies can be involved in cultural and heritage projects and anglers groups can offer fishing opportunities.

## The Governor's Endorsement and other promotions

Governor Schwarzenegger endorsed the COBR in a proclamation dated July 7, 2007. In his proclamation he stated "spending time in the great outdoors can be a wonderful experience for people of all ages, and this is especially true for our youth. Participating in outdoor activities is not only an enjoyable way for kids to get the exercise they need, it also helps them develop a greater appreciation for our magnificent environment." The California Park and Recreation Commission also endorsed the COBR in a resolution a month later and the California State Park Rangers Association voted to support the initiative at the 2007 conference.

Other agencies and organizations which have endorsed the COBR include the California



**California Children's**

**Outdoor Bill of Rights**

[www.calroundtable.org](http://www.calroundtable.org)

**Every kid's life list...**

- ☐ Discover California's Past
- ☐ Splash in the water
- ☐ Play in a safe place
- ☐ Camp under the stars
- ☐ Explore nature
- ☐ Learn to swim
- ☐ Play on a team
- ☐ Follow a trail
- ☐ Catch a fish
- ☐ Celebrate their heritage



Park and Recreation Society (with over 100 member agencies), the California Council of YMCAs, and the Pacific Stewardship Council, and the list is growing. The COBR is gaining statewide and national recognition and requests for presentations have come from the Rocky Mountains State Parks conference, the National Trails Conference, the National Association of Recreation, Resource Planners and the upcoming 2008 National Park and Recreation Association conference.

### Widespread Use

The Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights is being adopted and used in many ways. State Parks staff have used the COBR as a tool to approach local school groups and Boys and Girls clubs and develop partnerships whereby groups are challenged to complete the activities and utilize State Parks for some of the venues. The COBR is the framework for a recently launched effort in the Los Angeles basin to build collaboration and provide a directory of services.

The California Parks Company used the COBR to develop the "Fit Kids" program ([www.fitkids.us](http://www.fitkids.us)) that gives fun prizes to kids who complete all ten

activities.

The Fit Kids program also promotes healthy food choices while recreating, and the website features videos of fun (and healthy) camp cooking tips for kids. Other states including Connecticut have used the COBR to develop pledges.

### Resources and More Info

The California State Parks website ([www.parks.ca.gov/cinc](http://www.parks.ca.gov/cinc)) contains resources on the COBR including flyers in English and Spanish and sample certificates and a power point presentation. A banner is available on loan for special events. To find out more about the COBR including the Governor's proclamation and information on past symposia, see the website for the California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism ([www.cal-roundtable.org](http://www.cal-roundtable.org)). 🌿



*Morrie Turner is the creator of the first truly integrated comic strip, Wee Pals, started in 1965 and now reaching over 25 million readers. Morrie has always been a strong advocate for kids and has continued to work with children in small cartooning programs in the inner city. He is a guest lecturer at numerous California schools and universities. Morrie has received numerous awards and founded the African American Museum in Oakland.*

*Nina Gordon is honored to be a friend of Morrie's; she talked to him about the State Parks Children in Nature initiative. After reminiscing about the frogs and other discoveries of nature he found in his childhood Oakland neighborhood, Morrie offered to create a series of cartoons for State Parks pro-bono to promote the effort.*





## WEE PALS/ by Morrie Turner



## The CCC

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country crews live together without modern conveniences in tent camps supplied by mule train. Their daily "commute" is a fast-paced hike of up to five or more miles to the site where they will work for the day building and maintaining trails.

With strong support from the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Backcountry Horseman's Association, Yo-

semita Fund and California State Parks, these crews have completed more than 8,600 miles of trailwork over the past 30 years. With lungs and legs conditioned by daily challenges, crew members range far and wide on weekends exploring world-class canyons, peaks, and forests. Nearly 2,000 young people have completed the Backcountry including 600 whose experienced

gained in the program helped them land jobs with resource management agencies.

During my younger years I also had the opportunity to field crews to the mighty Klamath, Trinity and Smith rivers as well as other coastal watersheds to restore critical habitat and watersheds for salmon and steelhead. Waders and raingear provide only a partial barrier to the full ef-



fects of a rushing salmon stream and a gray, wet North Coast day.

A few lucky corpsmembers are chosen each year for another outdoor opportunity, our work exchange with Conservation Volunteers Australia. Participants receive an eye-opening look at nature Down Under.

In the CCC, not only do corpsmembers experience the outdoors for themselves, they become mentors for others. They share their new-found understanding with school children in tree-planting, community gardens, beach cleanups, and more. Hard work translates into service to others.

With our emergency response efforts during floods, fires and earthquakes, the CCC offers another side of Mother Nature. This summer our crews staffed dozens of dusty, smoky fire camps and also battled the flames on the fire lines. In the winter, corpsmembers fill sandbags in the midst of pouring rain and high winds, as rising waves lap against Delta levees.

It's no picnic. But a year in the California Conservation Corps is a life-changing experience, and daily contact with the outdoors, rain or shine, is one of the great benefits. As John Muir wrote, "In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks."

We firmly believe our corpsmembers will leave the CCC with a strong environmental ethic that will last a lifetime. My hope is they'll take that one step further and become "eco-warriors" for their generation, serving as strong stewards and leaders in the protection and enjoyment of the state's natural resources. 🌲

## WildLink: Building Connections Between Wilderness, Youth and Community

*by Mandy Vance, National Park Service*

In California, people of Latino-, Asian- and African-American descent comprise more than fifty percent of the population, yet the faces of our wilderness users do not mirror this rich cultural diversity. If we fail to engage these populations as active stewards of our protected lands, the resources of clean air, water and wilderness are at great risk; and a significant percentage of our citizenry are missing out on the many benefits that our wild places have to offer. We have the power to bridge this gap. After his WildLink experience, Francisco Andaluz accepted a position in Yosemite National Park. He said, "Yosemite is a part of me. But knowing the park well doesn't mean anything unless you genuinely became interested in protecting it for yourself and generations to come. I feel a call to cherish and protect what makes it precious-it's Wilderness."

WildLink is an innovative partnership between the Yosemite Institute, Yosemite and Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks, the Sequoia Natural History Association, and the National Forests of the Sierra. Since 2000, WildLink has worked to demonstrate the relevance and benefits of Wilderness and public lands to all Americans. WildLink gives underserved youth

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# Connecting Children to Nature

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about the sense of reward after climbing a hill, the joy of rolling back down through sage, and forever recalling its lingering scent. California State Park Off Highway Vehicle Division Chief Phil Jenkins still remembers the smell of sage many decades later. Phil relayed his story at a Director's off-site in 2006, during which we looked back on our childhood for those pivotal memories. The exercise and subsequent series of discussions concluded with the realization that we must ensure that the next generation experiences what we shared—both for their health and for the health of preserving all our public lands.

We are in the throes of a very disturbing period. This is the first time that an entire generation is growing up disconnected from nature. What a sobering thought. This alienation from nature has many causes, including lack of unstructured time to play, parents' perceptions of natural and human caused imminent dangers, and a plethora of seductive technological devices. We are also competing with children's expectations of continuous heightened stimulation and instant results, a tempo not usually mirrored in nature.

Professor Louise Chawla of Colorado State University completed a study to find out the motivation of environmental leaders to achieve their roles. The leaders all had two elements in common: they had opportunities to play in nature, and they each had mentors who took them to the outdoors.

California Biodiversity Council members are already forging ahead. The recent joint agency "BioBlitz" was a scene of very excited kids actively seeking and studying the fauna of an area and contributing to a larger understanding of the ecosystem. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service convened a session with major developers to explore their role in providing these opportunities. California State Parks has launched a "Children in Nature Campaign" to promote and expand opportunities for nature experiences and provides tools such as the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights, Junior Rangers, Fam-Camp, Outdoor Youth Connections, hundreds of interpretive programs and others. In addition to the interpretive programs, The National Park Service worked jointly with

California State Parks to complete a national survey of best practices for children in nature programs. The California Conservation Corps programs are powerful tools to engage young people with the outdoors and conservation. The Department of Water Resources provides a fishing program (CAST) for disabled youth. And there are many other programs by CBC agencies.

Part of the solution can be the simple act of introducing children to the natural world, and helping them over that threshold until their innate curiosity takes hold. I recently had the privilege of discussing these issues with Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder*. We talked about the "moral right" of a child to have these experiences in nature. No matter what position or job we have in our agencies, we can all contribute. Those memories will help shape every child's future and his/her connection to the land. It will enable children to be better stewards of our state parks and public lands.

Now, you can help a child in your life, and step outside. 🌲





# Wildlink

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a transformative experience through a series of fully scholarshiped wilderness and community-based programs. We provide the knowledge, inspiration and empowerment needed to develop long-term community leaders and environmental stewards of our public lands. Our partnership network provides ongoing support to allow participants to maximize their academic, emotional, physical and leadership potential.

Each year, over 100 culturally diverse high school students participate in our holistically designed program. An additional 300 individuals are positively impacted by individual program components like stewardship projects and family programs. The WildLink program includes: WildLink Family Orientation Meetings; five-day Wilderness Expeditions; WildLink Family Weekend in Yosemite National Park; Internships and career opportunities with the Yosemite WildLink Bridge program; website education outreach;

and our Wilderness Ambassador Program, which gives youth the inspiration and support network they need in order to act as environmental stewards in their home communities.

WildLink alumni report noticeable shifts in attitudes and values in relation to public lands and environmental responsibility. In a recent survey, the vast majority of our alumni said that they had returned to a public lands area with friends or family independently of WildLink, and had made a personal commitment to their community's environmental health because

of their WildLink experience. They also felt connected to a larger effort toward environmental health; and all of them said they would recommend a WildLink experience to others. With the ongoing support of our regional and local partnerships, WildLink will continue our efforts to ensure that the health of our wild places and watersheds are safeguarded by a fully engaged California citizenry. For more information on WildLink, go to <http://wildlink.wilderness.net>, or contact Mandy Vance, WildLink Program Director, at (209)372-0607 or [mandy\\_vance@partner.nps.gov](mailto:mandy_vance@partner.nps.gov). 🌲

*WildLink takes a field trip to Yosemite, California*



# Creative Leveraging and Partnerships Link Biodiversity and Scholastics

by Lisa A. Hokholt, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Hidden away in the tree-studded hills of central Alameda County is Palomares Elementary School, a school that has distinguished itself scholastically and environmentally through its pioneering learning connections to the outdoors.

It all started when deteriorating conditions along Palomares Creek threatened a nearby road causing concern by the Alameda County Public Works Agency and Flood Control District (ACPWA). The school was equally concerned about the steep and eroding creek bank so near its facilities. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Alameda County Resource Conservation District (RCD) confirmed their concerns. And if all that weren't enough to worry about, the small school was considering closing its doors – for a variety of reasons. Then, a spark of innovation came into the mix. What if these partners leveraged their resources to address the needs of the creek, got the students, teachers and parents involved, and established an outdoor classroom and curriculum based on the watershed

they were becoming so concerned about?

Well, that's exactly what they did. Palomares School began to capitalize on the learning opportunities presented to them by becoming intimately involved in the planning, site stabilization and restoration processes that were about to become a large part of their lives.

The first of the projects utilized an NRCS program called the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program to remove several diseased, non-native trees to make way for creek stabilization and native vegetation restoration projects. This project leveraged a Regional Water Quality Control Board grant that funded the creek stabilization component consisting of anchored-in root wads and crib walls constructed from surplus eucalyptus trees using a technique called bio-technical-engineering. According to NRCS District Conservationist Terry Huff who oversaw the design and installation, this technique creates a more naturalistic, robust structure that becomes a living part of the landscape. With the success of these projects the school ex-

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## GreenWorks!-Funded Projects Get Kids Outside

by Vanessa Bullwinkle, Project Learning Tree

**A**t Civicorps Elementary in Oakland, 200 students go outside to school and neighborhood gardens to strengthen learning in science, social studies, and other subjects. For example, first-graders are growing native plants to attract birds and insects, while fifth-graders harvested and sold worm compost. Third-graders are growing potatoes and garlic in a community garden near the school. The school community refurbished and now maintains seven 3'-by-5' raised beds in front of the school, as well as a 15'-by-25' plot near the playground.

Civicorps is one of the stops on the agenda for the CBC's Children in Nature meeting in October. This public charter school shows how the outdoors can become a natural extension to learning, even in a densely populated area of Oakland, thanks to the commitment



of school service learning coordinator Angelina Vergara, administrators, teachers, parents, and children. In addition to using the gardens during the school day, the plan for this coming school year is to extend use after school. The gardens will serve as a demonstration site for other schools through an after-school service club



*Ms. Bull teaches her first grade class about Civicorp's native garden*

called Project YES (Youth Engaged in Service). In addition, according to Vergara, each grade will spend a day or an overnight at an outdoor school in the Bay Area region to learn more about California's rich and biodiverse ecosystems.

Funding for the gardens came, in part, from GreenWorks!, the service-learning program of Project Learning Tree (PLT) that engages educators and their students with their local community in "learning-by-doing" neighborhood improvement projects. PLT has developed

elementary and secondary curricula that teach kids how to think, not what to think, about the environment. Many of the activities can be taught outside, no matter what "outside" entails for a particular community, based on the belief that every opportunity a child has to learn outdoors has the potential to become an experience that will be remembered for many years.

In addition to Civicorps Elementary, six projects throughout California have received GreenWorks! grants in 2007 and 2008, with a next round of grant applications due on

October 31, 2008. PLT-trained educators are eligible to apply for a GreenWorks! grant of up to \$5,000. Educators—including teachers, agency personnel, youth group leaders, and others—can become PLT-trained through workshops that are held regularly throughout the state. For more information about PLT, including the criteria and an application for a GreenWorks! grant, go to [www.plt.org](http://www.plt.org). For more about PLT in California, contact Kay Antunez, Kay. Antunez@fire.ca.gov or 916-653-7958. 🌿





# Biodiversity and Scholastics

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panded its interest in reinvigorating habitat for native trout, red-legged frogs, and other local wildlife. Additional partners joined in to help including the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, California Department of Fish and Game, and PG&E.

The entire Palomares Creek Restoration Project, from analyzing the site's needs, making choices on restoration approaches, to encouraging community involvement, were essential components in the school's fledgling watershed-based science curriculum. Students began to learn about biodiversity and ecology firsthand and to share their knowledge through unique learning and teaching opportunities. As members of the Junior Naturalist Program they might serve as riparian corridor docents at their annual Watershed Expo or work alongside biologists and engineers by collecting, recording, and organizing data, making computations, and drawing science-based conclusions from their research.

Meanwhile teachers, along with help from NRCS and the RCD, developed an all-subject curriculum that meets California's state standards. Palomares School serves as an environmental science model school, integrating environmen-

tal education with rigorous core curricular standards and research-proven best practices.

This all started back in 1999. Now, not only is Palomares School still open, it's thriving – as evidenced by several prestigious awards bestowed on them including the US Secretary of Education's Blue Ribbon Award for academic achievement and the California State Board of Education's Distinguished School award.

Palomares School students and their teachers proudly proclaim their enthusiasm about their watershed and its connection to San Francisco Bay. According to the school's website, "The fabulous outdoors provides an excellent learning laboratory for our students". They are proud to showcase their stabilized riparian area with its

handicapped accessible trail and footbridge, and array of biodiversity.

Their achievements continue to inspire and leverage resources to strengthen the focused vision at Palomares School. For example, ACPWA now funds a watershed coordinator position at the school to develop and lead watershed-based lessons, and to host field trips and workshops for students and teachers from other schools. NRCS and the RCD continue to provide technical resource management support. It's a success story that should leave a unique legacy of combining scholastic achievement with environmental focus and commitment among youth, government and community.

For more information please contact Lisa Hokolt, Lisa.Hokolt@ca.usda.gov or (925) 785-7325 X 118. 🌿



NRCS Ecologist Jackie Charbonneau teaches young scientists about amphibians and invertebrates that live in Palomares Creek. Photo taken at Palomares School Watershed Expo May 2008.

# "Children in Nature" Meeting Partners

For its October 8-9, 2008 "Children in Nature" Meeting, the California Biodiversity Council is partnering with the California Roundtable on Recreation and Tourism and the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council. The Council thanks these two wonderful organizations for their assistance in planning one of the Council's most successful and popular meetings.

## The Stewardship Council

The Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council brings together the expertise of leading conservation, natural resource management, business and public officials to undertake a historic stewardship effort for California. The Stewardship Council unites a wide range of interests to guide the development and execution of a Land conservation Plan and a Youth Investment Program to benefit current and future generations of Californians.

The Stewardship council is charged with ensuring more than 140,000 acres of watershed lands located across the state are conserved and enhanced to provide a broad range of beneficial public values. In addition, the Stewardship Council invests in community-based park and environmental education efforts to connect underserved youth in northern and central California with the outdoors.



youth in  
northern and  
central California  
with the outdoors.

# Stewardship Council



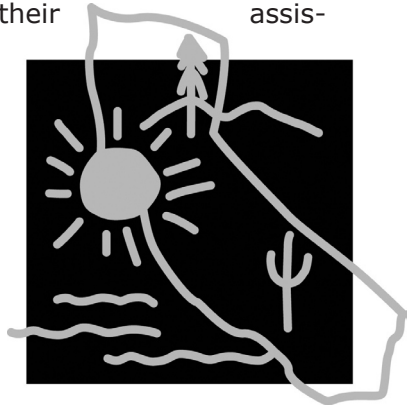
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## The Recreation Roundtable

The California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks and Tourism, (California Roundtable) founded in 1998, consists of recreation, parks and tourism leaders from local, state and federal governmental organizations, private enterprises, user groups, environmental groups, educational institutions and the public. The goal is to encourage cooperation between public and private entities involved and interested in outdoor recreation, public lands and tourism in California. The California Roundtable has proven to be a very successful forum for exchanging ideas and addressing issues through initiatives and symposia.

Accomplishments include:

- Produced the "Get Healthier Outdoors" Symposium -held in December 2007. This was one of the first forums jointly planned with park and recreation professionals and the health community. The forum identified common interests between health professionals and park and recreation professionals and set the stage for further action.
- Produced Connecting Californians to the Outdoors Symposium, May 2005. This forum included youth presenters and investigated barriers and solutions to reaching non-traditional visitors.
- Produced the California Children's Bill of Rights
- Sponsor of the 2005 and 2006 and upcoming 2008 Public Lands Symposia -These symposia bring together the private and public sectors to examine best practices and strategize on addressing issues for visitor services to public lands
- Produced a series of roadside rest map panels that highlight regional recreation destinations
- Co-Sponsored the California Cultural and Heritage Tourism Symposium, May 2005
- Produced California Visitor Capacity Management Workshop, July 2001
- Sponsored Campers in California, Travel Patterns and Economic Impacts, July 2000



# Biodiversity Council Meets to Discuss Climate Change

by Mike Chapel, USDA Forest Service

The California Biodiversity Council met on Oct 3-4, 2007 to discuss the implications of climate change to its member agencies. The first day was spent touring the Delta where there were presentations and discussions about the effects of climate change on biodiversity conservation, agriculture, water management, local land-use planning, and energy development and uses. The clear message from the field tour was that changing climate conditions will bring new challenges and opportunities for everyone.

The Council meeting on October 4 was divided into three discussions. First, the Council was provided with an overview of the climate change work that is under way by the State of California. Next, several speakers addressed the need for better understanding of emerging climate science by land managers. Finally, several member agencies presented some of their innovative climate change work to the Council.

## **The California Program for Climate Change**

Andrew Altevoigt (Cal EPA) provided some projections for climate change and highlighted the work by the State of California to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Dr. Altevoigt stated that global warming impacts could result in 75% loss in snow pack, 1-2 ft sea level rise, 70 more extreme heat days per year, and 55% more large forest fires by the end of the Century. He noted that, in California, GHG emissions are primarily from transportation (41%), Ag and Forestry (8%) and industrial activity (30%). The California program for climate change has established a goal of reducing overall GHG emission to the 1990 level by 2020. The work is being guided by the Climate Action Team which is led by the Secretary of Cal EPA. The "CAT" has outlined over 40 strategies for reducing GHG emissions. A total reduction of 175 mmt CO<sub>2</sub> is desired.

Maury Roos summarized some of the analysis by the Calif. Dept. Water Resources to support the state program from climate change. Mr. Roos confirmed that DWR expects

the annual precipitation to remain highly variable as the climate becomes warmer. Less snow is expected and snow will not accumulate at the lower elevations it does today. More runoff during winter and less during the spring is also expected. Sea level rises of 4-8 inches are anticipated by the end of the century. The Department is now assessing how they might manage the water-supply system for the state to address these changes.

Crawford Tuttle then explained some of the work that is under way by Cal Fire to support the California program for climate change. Mr. Tuttle stated that about 33 million acres (1/3 of state) is comprised of forests. He also noted that forests are extremely important for managing carbon emissions because they continuously remove CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and bind it (sequester) in plant material. Cal Fire is pursuing five strategies for improving the climate benefits that are derived from forests: 1) reforest denuded areas; 2) conserve forests that might be lost to development or wildfire; 3) increase the stocking and growth of existing forests; 4) plant more trees in urban areas; and 5) utilize wood waste as biomass





to capture energy while reducing carbon emission.

### **Coordination of Climate Change Science to Support Land Management Agencies**

Tony Brunello (Resources Agency) moderated a panel discussion on this topic.

First, John Donnelly (Wildlife Conservation Board) explained that his organization has spent over \$1.3 billion on more than 800,000 acres

for conservation statewide. Climate change was not a consideration in their purchases to date. However, climate-driven shifts in sea level, precipitation, and vegetation are now driving a need to evaluate the potential long-term climate effects on land purchases by the WCB. Mr. Donnelly noted that he presently lacks the capacity to follow emerging climate research. He expressed a need for assistance with this work.

Dave Graber told that Council that the National Park Service is also struggling to understand the potential effects of climate change on their programs. National Parks are to be preserved for natural and untrammelled ecosystems. Today, the strategy of avoiding active management of most ecosystems may no longer be appropriate. The National



Park Service is also following emerging climate research as a source of guidance for their future management options. Mr. Graber stated that better coordination among land managers and climate scientists will be needed to conserve biodiversity.

Darla Guenzler then explained that understanding climate change has become a priority for the California Council of Land Trusts. Her organization represents land trusts who are acquiring large acreages of land for conservation. They need help understanding the emerging science for the same reasons as the Wildlife Conservation Board.

Donna Reardon completed the discussion by explaining how the California Council on Science and Technology has assisted with reviews of sci-

ence for government agencies on other issues. Following her presentation, Rick Rayburn (California Department of Parks and Recreation) and Tony Brunello proposed that the Biodiversity Council contract with the CCST for periodic reviews of climate science. A steering committee of land managers and researchers would be formed to guide the work. The Council concurred with the recommendation to form a partnership with the CCST. Several agencies then volunteered to fund the work and participate on the steering committee. The project will be led by the California Resources Agency and participating agencies will include the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Forest

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# Working Landscapes Inspire Biodiversity Council in Grass Valley

by Lauren McNees,  
California Biodiversity Council

For its spring meeting, the California Biodiversity Council met on April 30-May 1 in Grass Valley and Auburn to learn about Working Landscapes. By maintaining working landscapes, farmers, ranchers, and private forest owners play an important role in biodiversity conservation in California. This was seen clearly on the first afternoon's field trip throughout the lower foothills surrounding Auburn. The Council visited Doty Ravine Preserve, owned by the Placer Land Trust, and managed through selective intensive cattle and sheep grazing to keep invasive species down and vernal pool habitat healthy. Participants then stopped at the Natural Trading Company, a 40-acre organic produce farm which keeps 1/3 of its acreage out of production for the benefit of resident wildlife. The farm is pursuing a conservation easement with Placer Legacy so that the farm will be protected as open space in perpetuity. The last field trip stop showcased Auburn's Beard Ranch, a cow-calf operation located in a typical oak-woodland-range habitat. This ranch supports the principles of a working landscape not only through selective grazing and woodland habitat preservation, but also through education and agricultural tourism, bringing the public right to the farm.

The CBC's first day of working landscapes came to a close with a dinner presentation about working forestlands by Constance Best from the Pacific Forest Trust.

The Council met on the second day in Grass Valley for a nearly full day of presentations and discussions about working landscapes opportunities throughout California. As the Council learned, California, a major agricultural

state with 50% of lands in private ownership and a population 36 million, has some significant challenges and opportunities for working lands.

Ashley Boren from Sustainable Conservation started the day off with an overview about what working landscapes are, how they benefit biodiversity, and how to make them viable in California. She emphasized that any working land must be economically profitable in order to succeed. Some challenges she's seen to profitability are the complexity of the permitting process, and the analyses and permits required by the Endangered Species Act. Sustainable Conservation assists landowners in bridging these challenges so that land can be kept in farming, ranching and forestry, rather than converted to development. Sustainable Conservation received the Leopold Award in 2008 for their good work.

The day's morning panel of presentations highlighted several examples of successful collaborative efforts at working lands. Sheila Barry from the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition (CRCC) explained how her organization brings together environmentalists, ranchers, and resource professionals from federal and state agencies to promote biodiversity through grazing and other land stewardship practices by ranchers and landowners. With over 75 members, they are a significant resource for landowners in California. Vance Russell from Audubon California gave an overview of the Landowner Stewardship Program that promotes and assists with conservation, restoration, habitat connectivity, and science



and education on many large privately owned ranches in Northern California. Like CRCC, they work with many partners including the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Resource Conservation Districts, universities, and federal, state and local government to improve conditions on the ranches they assist. Allison Jordan's presentation showed the Council how similar principles can be applied to winegrowing in California. As Executive Director of the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance, Allison promotes winegrowing practices that are environmentally sound, economically feasible and socially equitable. Their work has led to long-term viability of winegrowing lands, improved wildlife habitat, and higher quality wine for hundreds of wineries in California.

The day's afternoon panel of presentations highlighted several programs that specifically assist in sustaining working landscapes. Loren Clark from the Placer Legacy, whose county-based organization has funded the protection of nearly 3,000 acres in Placer County, maintains working landscapes through conservation easements and land acquisitions. Brian Leahy from the California Department of Conservation explained how the Williamson Act keeps 1/3 of private land in California as open space through this special state contract. These working landscapes provide benefits to wildlife, farmers, and the public by keeping these lands in sustainable farming. Carrie Thompson from the Fish and Wildlife Service explained how the Partners for

Fish and Wildlife program provides restoration cost-sharing for private landowners. The overall goal of this program is to restore plant communities and habitats for the benefit of federally listed species, and it has been successful on many different types of habitats in California. Devere Dressler from the California Rangeland Trust (CRT) explained that some ranchers used to be fearful that their ownership rights would be compromised through conservation easement agreements, but through the assistance of organizations like CRT, this is no longer the case. Governed entirely by ranchers, CRT's success has led to nearly 400,000 acres of private rangelands awaiting funding for permanent conservation.

After seeing the day's presentations, Council members were impressed that there are so many farmers and landowners in California who are taking the time and effort to maintain working landscapes. Clearly government and private programs are of significant assistance in sustaining working landscapes, but at this meeting participants really learned just how far farmers will go out of their way to protect biodiversity and maintain healthy open space. 🌿





# Climate Change

(continued from page 15)

Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Land Management.

## **An Overview of Climate Change Programs and Opportunities in California**

Andrew Altevogt returned to offer some suggestions about ways that CBC members might participate with the climate change program in California. He stated that the Climate Action Team has formed several sector working groups and CBC member agencies may wish to engage with these groups. Each group is working on mitigation strategies that are intended to reduce GHG emissions. Many groups are also working on adaptation strategies that will help communities and the environment anticipate and adjust to changing climate conditions. Important work groups include those working on agriculture, forestry, land use, water and energy.

Next, panel of CBC member agencies described some of the important work they are leading to address climate change.

Jon Jarvis stated that the National Park Service decided to emphasize climate change

several years ago. They first held a workshop to bring all 54 field units together. Field managers heard the most current climate science. They were then tasked to find ways of improving their operations to address climate change challenges. The field units share their successes and the agency now has a robust climate change program that includes public education, emission management, new research, certification of buildings, and solar energy investments.

Ruth Coleman described the "Cool Parks" program at the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The program has three components. The first focuses on reducing the agencies GHG emissions through improvements in vehicles, buildings, and equipment. The second component involves staffing and supporting the projects like the CBC partnership with the California Council on Science and Technology. The third component is to improve public education about climate change through interpretive services at state parks.

Sam Schuchat discussed how the California Coastal Conservancy integrated climate change into their strategic plan. He explained how

sea level change could have a dramatic impact on their work to conserve coastal resources. Long-term easements are a particular challenge for the Coastal Conservancy.

Steve Saunders (Institute for Local Government) explained that the California State Association of Counties and the League of Cities are working together on a three-part program for climate change. The program includes: 1) information and tools for local governments that wish to work on climate change; 2) networking for managers with similar programs; and 3) development of a set of best practices for addressing climate issues.

Mark Nechodom noted that the USDA Forest Service owns about 20% of the land and about half the forest land in California. The leadership of the agency is now actively considering the roles that national forests might play with carbon sequester. Reducing carbon emissions from wildfire remains priority for the agency. Adequate data to track the carbon flows through forests, biomass and wildfire remains a major challenge. The Forest Service was the first federal agency in California to join the Climate Action Registry. 🌲



# The CBC and the California Wildlife Action Plan

by Lauren McNees, California Biodiversity Council

On January 22, 2008 the California Biodiversity Council met for one day to learn about California's State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). The SWAP was recently completed by the California Department of Fish and Game, and endorses many of the same principles that originally inspired the formation of the California Biodiversity Council. The goals for the day's meeting were to improve CBC members' understanding about the plan and how they can help implement it, highlight conservation issues and recommended actions from the plan for the Central Valley, and to demonstrate how these actions are already underway by ongoing efforts to conserve private land in the Central Valley.

Steve Thompson, longtime CBC member with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, opened with an overview of what led to the need for State Wildlife Action Plans. He explained that consistency in conservation planning was lacking throughout the 50 states, and while the Endangered Species Act is very important, comprehensive "action plans" could prevent additional species

from needing to be listed in the future.

Kevin Hunting followed with a comprehensive overview of what the plan is, how it's different from other states' plans, and how it should be used in California. Because California is a large, diverse state, its plan needed to be broad and usable across a variety of interests and situations. The plan addresses and defines "stressors" from a regional approach so that it may effectively determine the species and habitats of greatest conservation need. It then recommends "actions" for addressing these stressors, but Kevin points out that the only effective method for a successful SWAP in California will be a collaborative one, with participation from many of the agencies that make up the California Biodiversity Council.

The day's first panel, moderated by Mike Chapel, focused on how the SWAP can be used as a framework for biodiversity conservation by federal, state, and local government as well as private organizations. Panelists included Rick Rayburn, California State Parks; Kim Delfino, Defenders of Wildlife;

Julia McIver, Yolo County; Bill Haigh, Bureau of Land Management; and Laura Valoppi, US Fish and Wildlife Service. Some of the reasons identified to use the SWAP in conservation planning were: to aid in identifying priorities for land acquisition and restoration, to provide a structured process in place of ad-hoc planning, to incorporate wildlife into county general plans, to avoid future species listings, and to promote collaboration and increase partnerships overall.

Marc Hoshovsky gave a case example about how the SWAP could effectively be implemented in one of California's bioregions, the central valley. The central valley is facing some of the highest growth rates in California, which is leading to habitat loss and fragmentation. Marc explained how the existing collaborative conservation work going on in the valley could be applied towards addressing the stressors identified in the SWAP.

The day's final panel focused on private land conservation. Susan Kester, Sustainable Conservation, explained how the Tricolored Blackbird Res-

*(continued on page 21)*



# CBC Welcomes Two New Members

This year, the California Biodiversity Council officially incorporated the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Board into its membership. Please help us in welcoming these agencies to the table!

## The Sierra Nevada Conservancy

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is a state agency created by bi-partisan legislation and signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger in 2004. The SNC was created with the understanding that the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada and its communities are closely linked and that the Region would benefit from an organization providing a strategic direction.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy initiates, encourages, and supports efforts that improve the environmental, economic and social well-being of the Sierra Nevada Re-

gion, its communities and the citizens of California.

The SNC supports the Sierra Nevada Region in many tan-

gible ways: from providing funding for local projects to offering technical assistance and other support for collaborative projects in partnership with local government, non-profit organizations and Tribal entities. Activities supported will contribute to the following program objectives:

- \* provide increased opportunity for tourism and recreation in the Region;
- \* protect, conserve and restore the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical and living resources;
- \* aid in the preservation of working landscapes;

“ Given the mission of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, we are pleased to become a member of the California Biodiversity Council and look forward to participating in the Council's work to promote biodiversity in California. ”

**Jim Branham, Sierra Nevada Conservancy**

- \* reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfire;
- \* protect and improve water and air quality;



- \* assist the regional economy; and
- \* enhance public use and enjoyment of lands owned by the public.

Funding for the implementation of the SNC's programs is primarily provided by bond funds (Proposition 84, 2006). The SNC has been allocated a total of \$54 million of Proposition 84 funds for grant distribution and neces-

sary administration of the grants. In its first year of grant-making (2007-08), the SNC distributed nearly \$17 million to 146 projects throughout the Sierra Nevada. The Conservancy awards grants to eligible entities

supporting projects consistent with our mission and funding sources.





## The Wildlife Conservation Board

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) was created by legislation in 1947 to administer a capital outlay program for wildlife conservation and related public recreation. Originally created within the California Department of Natural Resources, and later placed with the Department of Fish and Game, the WCB is a separate and independent Board with authority and funding to carry out an acquisition and development program for wildlife conservation (California Fish and Game Code 1300, et seq.). The Board consists of the President of the Fish and Game Commission, the Director of the Department of Fish and Game and the Director of the Department of Finance. Legislation that created the Board also established a Legislative Advisory Committee consisting of three members of the Senate and three members of the Assembly, which meet with the Board, providing legislative oversight.

The primary responsibilities of the Board are to select, authorize and allocate funds

for the purchase of land and waters suitable for recreation purposes and the preservation, protection and restoration of wildlife habitat. The Board approves and funds projects that set aside lands within the State for such purposes, through acquisition or other means, to meet these objectives. The Board can also authorize the construction of facilities for recreational purposes on property in which it has a proprietary interest.

The Wildlife Conservation Board's three main functions are land acquisition, habitat restoration and development of wildlife oriented public access facilities. These activities are carried out under the following programs:

- \* California Forest Conservation Program (CFCP)
- \* California Riparian Habitat Conservation Program (CRHCP)
- \* Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands (ERAL)
- \* Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Program (General)
- \* Inland Wetlands Conservation Program (IWCP)
- \* Land Acquisition Program
- \* Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program
- \* Oak Woodlands Conservation Program
- \* Public Access Program
- \* Rangeland, Grazing Land and Grassland Protection Program

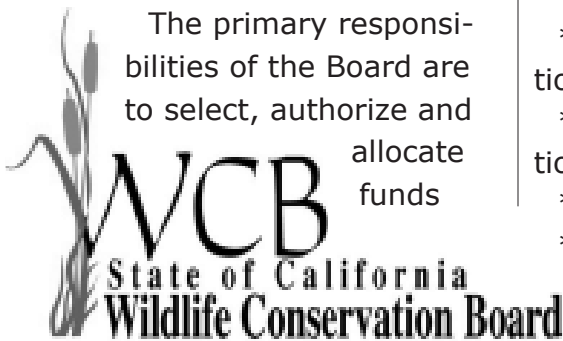
## Wildlife Action Plan

*(continued from page 19)*

toration Project, through partnerships among government, agricultural groups, and conservation groups has led to increased wetlands creation and research for this bird of special concern. Nathan Key, NRCS, explained how the Wetlands Reserve Program, through joint planning with nearly 10 partners, has put 95,000 acres into easements. Paul Robins, Yolo County RCD, hosts workshops which link students and farmers to create restoration and conservation plans, and it is highly effective.

To bring the meeting to a close, Rob Hansen from the Tulare Basin Wildlife Partners presented information on the collaborative work the organization does in the central valley, and also what it would like to contribute in the future through an Integrated Regional Watershed Management Plan. California Biodiversity Council members committed to assisting in partnership-building in preparation for this process.

Lastly, the UC Davis Raptor Center brought several birds to the meeting so that participants could see some of the animals that are highlighted in the State Wildlife Action Plan. 🌿





The California Biodiversity Council approaches biological conservation in California at a bioregional scale. These bioregions are primarily based upon the state's physiographic provinces.

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Northern California Counties Assn.

## Upcoming Events

**Oct. 11-12, 2008**    **11th Annual Salmon Festival**  
Sponsor: CA Dept. of Fish & Game  
Location: Rancho Cordova, California  
Contact: Bruce Forman, bforman@dfg.ca.gov, (916) 958-2353  
<http://salmonfestival.net/>

**Nov. 5-9, 2008**    **Society of American Foresters National Convention**  
Sponsor: Society of American Foresters  
Location: Reno-Tahoe, Nevada  
Contact: Carol McKernon, mckernonc@safnet.org, (866) 897-8720 ext. 102  
<http://www.safnet.org/natcon-08/index.cfm>

**Jan. 17-19, 2009**    **The CNPS 2009 Conservation Conference: Strategies and Solutions**  
Sponsor: California Native Plant Society  
Location: Sacramento, California  
Contact: Josie Crawford, jcrawford@cnps.org, 916-447-2677

**Mar. 18-19, 2009**    **California Biodiversity Council State-wide Meeting on Alternative Energy**  
Sponsor: California Biodiversity Council  
Location: El Centro, California  
Contact: Lauren McNees, lauren.mcnees@fire.ca.gov, (916) 445-5815  
<http://biodiversity.ca.gov/meetings.html>

**Mar. 22-26, 2009**    **International Master Gardener Conference**  
Sponsor: University of Nevada  
Location: Las Vegas, Nevada  
Contact: UNCE, (702) 257-5587  
<http://www.unce.unr.edu/imgc/>

**Apr. 27-30, 2009**    **UC Agriculture and Natural Resources Statewide Conference**  
Sponsor: University of California  
Location: Sacramento, California  
Contact: Sherry Cooper, slcooper@nature.berkeley.edu, (530) 224-4902  
<http://groups.ucanr.org/statewidemeet->





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